

## February 2016 Column

Did you ever think that Seguin, Texas and Flint, Michigan could ever be compared? Well, read on...

Imagine you've worked hard for something, - something that could create real, tangible security for yourself, your family and even your community for generations to come. You paid for it, you fought to keep it, you nurtured it, and made it a success. Then you sat back, wiped your brow, and said "Whew, now we and our descendants won't have to worry about that for a very, very long time." Then, out of nowhere jumps a reckless demon that threatens to ruin it all.

What I just described is the situation that the City of Seguin, and our partners, the City of Schertz are facing now with our major water source. Both cities worked against enormous odds in the 1990's to form the Schertz-Seguin Local Government Corporation or SSLGC. They convinced Wall Street financiers that issuing bonds to purchase land, drill water wells in the Carrizo/Wilcox aquifer, and run pipelines in an obscure region of south Texas was a good, sound financial deal. They worked tirelessly to secure the land, build the treatment plant and pipeline system, and deal with all the regulatory headaches.

All this hard work produced the most abundant, reliable and pristine water supply in the state of Texas. Neither Seguin nor Schertz had to worry about water supplies for the foreseeable future.

Now, out jumps the aforementioned reckless demon.

As you might suspect, that reckless demon is the proposed Post Oak Landfill. These guys want to place a toxic dump in a location that could possibly pollute and ruin the most precious natural resource in this region. (Think Flint, Michigan) This toxic dump is an existential threat to every citizen who lives here and to the economic growth we now enjoy. It has to be stopped.

At the hearing last month in Austin, the SSLGC attorneys and experts did an excellent job of disproving and discrediting the claims of the Post Oak proponents. Also, for what it's worth, Mayor Carpenter of Schertz, County Commissioner Greg Seidenberger and I all entered written testimony and were questioned briefly on the stand.

Here are a couple of major points of information that came out of the hearing:

1. The big one – At first, we knew that the dump would be over the recharge zone by only a few feet, but now we know it will be placed **BELOW** the water table of the aquifer! In other words, it will be literally floating on our water source. This new information was gleaned by our experts, who reviewed the boring surveys done by the dump applicants themselves.
2. The dump will not be "State of the Art" as has been advertised. It will be built to ordinary standards with no exceptional specifications regarding its design. Imagine that - just a few millimeters of plastic between toxic waste and our water supply.

Overall, our attorneys were successful in delivering sound, documented reasons as to why this dump permit should be denied. They were also successful in discrediting the technical claims of the applicants as to the nature of the dump site.

It is all in the administrative judges' hands now. They will give their recommendations to TCEQ this summer, and TCEQ will rule on the permit in late 2016. Please pray... and get ready to jump on a bus to flood the TCEQ Commissioners' open meeting with protestors from Seguin and Guadalupe County this Fall.

Something that is very hard for me to understand about all this is that much of the financing for this dump is coming from powerful, wealthy individuals from San Antonio and the surrounding area. I don't think they realize what they are doing. SSLGC has been selling water to San Antonio (SAWS) for several years. While our recent agreement to supply water to SAWS has expired, they may need us again. Also the multi-billion dollar SAWS project known as Vista Ridge will draw its water from the same aquifer. Not to mention all the other surrounding communities in Gonzales and Wilson counties that will also be threatened.

I'm not an anti-landfill, not-in-my-backyard, tree-hugging enviro-nut. I just don't think it's a good idea to float a huge toxin filled Glad Bag in our primary water source. No clear thinking person would think so.

Guadalupe County Commissioners Court has identified several other places in the county where a landfill can be located, and not threaten our water supply. This is not the only place a landfill can be located.

Please, God, don't let them turn us into Flint, Michigan!

Gosh I love this town!